

# Prabuddha Bharata

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प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

*Katha Upa. I. iii. 4*

Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

—Swami Vivekananda.

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## CONVERSATIONS AND DIALOGUES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

( RECORDED BY A DISCIPLE. )

PART II.—X.

[ Place—*Belur Math.* Year—1899.

Subject—*The real nature of Brahman, Ishvara, Maya and Jiva.—Conceiving the Ishvara to be an all-powerful Personality at first and advancing in Sadhana in that idea, in course of time His real nature is understood—there is no Mukti without the realisation of 'I am the Brahman'—and that does not come without renouncing lust and the desire for wealth.—Atmajnana (Self-Knowledge) is obtained by inner and outer Sannyasa—giving up lukewarmness in religious life. ]*

Swamiji is now in very good health. The disciple has come to the Math on Sunday morning. After visiting Swamiji he has come down-stairs and discussing the Vedantic Scriptures with Swami Nirmalananda. At this time Swamiji himself came down-stairs and addressing the disciple said, "What were you discussing with Tulsi."

Disciple.— Sir, he was saying, 'the Brahman of Vedanta is only known to you and your Swamiji.' We on the contrary know Sri Krishna Himself to be the Lord incarnate.

Swamiji.— What did you say?

Disciple.— I said, the Atman is the

one Truth. Krishna was a person who realised this Atman. Swami Nirmalananda is at heart a believer in the Vedanta; on the outside he takes up the side of dualism and argues accordingly. First mooting the statement of the Ishvara as a Person, then by a gradual process of reasoning to establish the firm foundation of the Vedanta seems to be his object. But whenever he calls me a "Vaishnava" I forget his real intention and set to a heated discussion with him.

Swamiji.— He loves you and so enjoys the fun of teasing you. By his saying so, why will you be teased? You will answer back, "You, Sir, are an atheist, a believer of Nihilism."



Disciple.— Sir, is there any such statement in the Upanishads that Ishvara is an all-powerful Personality? But people generally believe in such an Ishvara.

Swamiji.— The highest principle, the Lord of All, cannot be a Person. Jiva is an individual and the collectivity of Jiva is Ishvara. In Jiva, *avidya* or Nescience is predominant, but Ishvara controls Maya composed of Avidya and Vidya and independently of anything projects this world of moving and immovable things out of Himself. But Brahman is transcendent to the individual and collective, the Jiva and Ishvara. In Brahman, there is no part. In order to make it comprehensible to the human intellect, parts have been imagined in It. With reference to that part of Brahman which appears as the birth, stay, and dissolution of the universe, has been ascribed the Ishvara aspect of Brahman. The unchangeable aspect, with reference to which there is no thought of duality, is indicated as Brahman. But do not on that account think that Nature, Jiva or Soul are independent realities from Brahman. The qualified Monists of the Vedanta say that Brahman has been modified or changed into Jiva and Nature. The Monists on the contrary say that in the Brahman Jiva and creation have been superimposed unreally. In reality there have been no modifications in Brahman. The Monists say creation consists only in name and form. So long as there is name and form, the creation endures. Then through meditation and practice, name and form is dissolved and only the transcendent Brahman remains. Then the separate reality of I and you, of Jiva and creation is felt no longer. Then it is realised that I am the Eternal, the Pure, the Essence of Intelligence. The real nature of Jiva is Brahman. When

the veil of name and form vanishes by meditation and practice, then that idea is realised. This is the substance of Pure Advaita or Monism. Veda and Vedanta only explain this idea in different ways.

Disciple.— How then is it true that Ishvara is an almighty Person?

Swamiji.— Man is man because qualified by the limiting adjunct of mind. With the mind he has to understand and grasp everything and therefore whatever he thinks must be limited by the mind. Therefore to argue from the analogy of his own personality, the personality of Ishvara (God) is the natural way of man. Man can only think of his ideal as a human being. When buffeted by sorrows in this world of disease and death, he is driven to desperation and helplessness, then he longs for such a refuge, relying on whom he may feel safe. But where is that refuge to be found? The Self-existent, omnipresent Atman is the only Refuge. At first man does not see that. When discrimination and dispassion arises in the course of meditation and spiritual practices, he comes to know it. But in whatever way he may progress on the path of spirituality, everyone is unconsciously awakening the Brahman within him. But the means may be different in cases. Those who have faith in the Personal God, have to perform spiritual practices relying on and holding to that idea. If there is sincerity, from that will come the awakening of the lion of Brahman within. Brahmajnana (knowledge of Brahman) is the one goal of Jivas, but various ideās are the various paths to it. Although the real nature of Jiva is the Brahman, still as he has identification with the qualifying adjunct of mind he suffers from doubts and difficulties, pleasure and pain. But everyone from the Brahman (the highest created



being) to a blade of grass is advancing towards the realisation of his real Nature. Getting the human birth, when the desire for freedom becomes very strong attended with the grace from a person of realisation, then man's desire for Atmajnana (self-knowledge) becomes very powerful; otherwise the mind of men given to desire for wealth and lust never inclines that way. He who has the desire in his mind to attain wealth, fame, and to be bound up within the narrow circle of family life, how will the search for the knowledge of Brahman arise in him? He, who is prepared to renounce all, who in the strong current of the duality of good and bad, happiness and misery, is calm, steady, balanced, attentive and awake to Reality, endeavours to attain to Self-knowledge. He alone by the might of his own power tears asunder the net of the world, and breaking the barriers of Maya emerges like a mighty lion.

Disciple.— Well then, is it true that without Sannyasa, there can be no Brahmajnana (knowledge of Brahman)?

Swamiji.— That is true, a thousand times; Sannyasa (renunciation), not only of the inner bondages but also of the limiting circumstances of external life. Sankaracharya in commenting on the Upanishadic text, "neither by Tapas (spiritual practice) devoid of necessary accompaniments", has said that by practising Sadhana without the external badge of Sannyasa (the *gefrua* robe, the staff and *Kamandalu*), the Brahman, which is difficult to attain, is not realised. Without dispassion for the world, without renunciation, without the giving up of the desire for enjoyment, can anything be accomplished in the spiritual life? "It is not like a sweetmeat in the hands of a child which you can get out by tricks."

Disciple.— But, Sir, in the course of spiritual practices, that renunciation may come.

Swamiji.— Those to whom it will come gradually, let it come so to them. Will you sit and wait for that? At once set to work digging the channel which will convey the waters of spirituality to your life. Sri Ramakrishna used to urge the giving up of all lukewarmness, as in such thoughts that religion will come gradually and there is no hurry for it. When real thirst has come, can one sit idle? Does he not run about for water? Because your thirst for spirituality has not come, therefore you are sitting idly. The desire for knowledge has not become strong, therefore you are living absorbed in the little thoughts of family life.

Disciple.— Really I do not understand why that idea of the renunciation of all does not arise. Do you, Sir, make some way for that?

Swamiji.— The end and the means are all in your hands. I can only stimulate your desire for that. You have read so many scriptures and have made the association of some Brahmajnani Sadhus and Sannyasins—even if this does not bring the idea of renunciation, then your life is in vain. But it will not be altogether vain—the effect of it will manifest some way or other in time.

The disciple is sitting with head cast down in dejection thinking of his eventual destiny and then again addressing Swamiji said, "Sir, I have come under your refuge, do you open the path of Mukti for me—that I may realise the Truth in this body?"

Swamiji observing the dejection of the disciple, said, "What fear is there? Always discriminate,—this body, house, Jiva and world are all absolutely false—like a



dream. Always ponder that this body is only an inert instrument. The Self-existent Purusha within is your real *swarupa* (nature). The adjunct of mind is His first and subtle covering then this body is the gross outer covering. The Unbroken, Changeless, Self-effulgent Purusha is lying hidden under these veils therefore your real Nature is unknown to you. The direction of the mind towards the senses has to be turned within. The mind has to be killed. The body is gross—it dies and dissolves in the five elements.

The bundle of Samskaras or mental impression which is the mind does not die soon. It remains for sometime in seed-forms and then sprouts and grows in the form of a tree;—and getting a physical body it goes round the wheel of birth and death until Self-knowledge arises. Therefore do I say that by meditation and practice and by the power of philosophical discrimination plunge this mind in the Ocean of Absolute Existence and Bliss. When the mind dies, all limiting adjuncts vanish and you are established in the Brahman.

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### OCCASIONAL NOTES.

ONE of the great problems which needs working out is the rebuilding of Indian life and social organism according to modern needs and suited to present environments. The general principles have been fairly well indicated by movements of Hindu revival, viz. the theme of Indian life, individual and collective is religion, and all other departments of its activity are subordinate and subservient to it; the scheme of life in its social organisation is built up with a view to contribute to and conserve it, and man is gradually led up through the stages of life in society to the realm of the supersocial, when after fulfilling the duties of life in pursuit or *artha kama* and *dharma* developing the latent richness of outer life in thought and action, he reaches the final destiny of man, the attainment of Moksha or liberation.

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In order to attain this high level the soul has to pass through action and discipline in the *ashramas* of life, and by labour and action in the pursuit of lawful

earthly desires, to evoke all the wealth of human faculties, intellectual, emotional and æsthetic. A colourless personality without depth of emotional or intellectual nature ill qualifies for the living of the life of highest spiritual ideals. A perfect development of the human personality with the evocation of the richest contents of qualities and faculties by labour and action in the social life is the condition of all healthy spiritual life. So there is need of a vigorous, active, outer life to get out of it all its rich values in the development of thought, will and emotion. But there is a limitation, a restraining factor. Human life is not the last word of evolution, nor is it its sole significance. The life of man in its social, communal and national aspects furnishes so many symbols by which his progress in love, knowledge and action is helped and they should be subserved to the gradual unfolding of the Spirit. Life in the world in its various aspects is not an end in itself, so that the greater its intensity and variety, complexity and rami-



fication, 'the more the human soul gets covered over with its workings,' the greater is the measure of its flowering and success; but its workings are to be controlled from making a preponderant claim on man, given a higher direction and contribute to the evolution of his spiritual destiny. So on the one hand if we want an active, vigorous, vital outer life in social and communal aspects as the basis on which the spire of the spiritual life may be raised, life in the world should not be allowed to usurp the inner spiritual core of our scheme of life.

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If Moksha, immortality, divinity be the objective of the Indian scheme of life, then everything else in our external life, must be made to harmonise with it. The question which and to what extent we will change our society and take on the forms of modern condition for a more fruitful living will be determined by the success we can assimilate them to our culture and make them characteristic mode of our being. It was pointed out by Swami Vivekananda that everything we admit into our culture must be recast into our own mould, always preserving the inner soul of our culture viz. religion and spirituality. (The East and West by Swami Vivekananda). Whether we shall admit commercialism and industrialism in our scheme of life, or the idea of social equality and political liberty and democracy will ultimately depend upon how far will these fit in and reinforce the spiritual motive of Indian civilisation.

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But for successful adaptation to modern condition and for successful functioning by taking over modern forms and institutions, one precondition is absolutely necessary, viz. the vitality, intensity and creative

energy of the inner assimilative core, which in the case of India is the Sanatana Dharma. So new ideas and new forms can only be assimilated if the backbone of national life is vital, so that it can transform it into a mode for self-expression. The question of practical application of the general principles of our cultures in terms of modern life will only be successfully tackled when the whole people will be roused in the spirit of Sanatana Dharma. Before that it will either be inconsiderate imitations of Western ideas and institution or a living of the life of isolation and self-seclusion, both of which will hamper the fruitful energising of Indian culture. Therefore it is that Swami Vivekananda so insistently urged the flooding of the land with the spiritual ideas of religion, as the first condition of healthy and vigorous national existence. Then standing on our ground anything valuable will be taken which comes to us from outside to the extent we require for conserving our own culture, and also of extending the range and extent of our external life, and the whole process of growth will be a growth from within and not a mere accretion from without.

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And not only in India, but the Sanatana Dharma will also have to win triumphs outside. The blinding glamour which Western civilisation, vital and creative, has cast upon us will not be broken and we will not learn to see things in the proper proportion, what to preserve in our own culture, what to accept, assimilate and adapt from outside, if Indian spirituality does not itself become vital and creative, capable of winning triumphs and making its mark in the thought-world. Because the Sanatana Dharma has fallen into a state of torpor, quiescent passivity how



ever brilliant its embodiment and realisation in individual lives, that surrounded by the powerful functioning of Western civilisation, we are liable to be dragged out of our Indian life and run for inconsiderate imitation. Therefore Hinduism must be made aggressive in a religious sense, according to Swami Vivekananda.

Indeed it is the prime condition of healthy existence as a cultural unit. We cannot go the same length, and on the same lines in our individual, commercial or political life as the nations of the West without betraying our spiritual scheme of life, we cannot afford to go the same lengths in material wealth, commercial prosperity as the nations of the West, without fastening upon us an economic and material view of life and killing the spiritual principle in our culture. These have to be kept down in order to conserve the soul of our culture which is spirituality and religion. But our hope and future lies in the power of our spiritual ideas spreading over the world among the powerful nations of the West making them the allies and adherents to our ideas, making their mark in the thought-world. The world is now dominated by the influences of the powerful nations of the West and in order to preserve our culture, we must win them over to the side of our cultural ideas.

This has been the characteristic reaction of the Indian spiritual consciousness to the impact of the Western civilisation. Ever since the breaking of the waters of Western civilisation on the shores of Indian consciousness, there has been going on this silent percolation and permeation of spiritual ideas through the strata of the world's thought. The mes-

sage of India's spirituality was carried to the West during the early part of the present revival by Raja Ram Mohon Roy and followed by the preaching and ministry in the West of Keshub Chandra Sen. But the triumph of Sanatana Dharma came with the historic address of the Swami Vivekananda at the Chicago Parliament of Religions in 1893 which put its seal to the work. His successful and triumphant preaching of India's religion in Western countries not only established there a footing for our cultural ideas but laid the seed for the gathering of the rich harvest of the future. Even before all this, with the opening of the study of Sanskrit literature and philosophy among the Orientalists of the West, our philosophical and cultural ideas had begun to operate and make its mark in the world of thought, and referring to the influence of the study of Sanskrit culture, the German philosopher Schopenhauer said: "The world is about to see a revolution in thought more extensive and more powerful than that which was witnessed by the Renaissance of Greek literature." And this slow infiltration of our cultural ideas has been silently going on to an extent not realised by us which has made a Christian missionary writer say (quoted by Sir John Woodroffe in "Is India Civilised"?): "On returning to England and trying to gather the threads of theological study in the West, the author is amazed to find the extent to which Hindu Pantheism has already begun to permeate the religious conceptions of Germany, of America and even England." The whole trend of events and the flow of thought have been for long preparing for the spread and dissemination of Indian philosophic and religious thought.



'This is one constantly reiterated message of the Swami Vivekananda in the course of his Indian lectures, his oft-repeated appeal to the youth of this country. It has been pointed out by him as one of the principle lines of action to be adopted for the regeneration and creation of a great future for India. As he says in his Indian lectures: "We must go out, we must conquer the world through our spirituality and philosophy. There is no other alternative, we must do it or die. The only condition of national life, of awakened and vigorous national life, is the conquest of the world by Indian thought." This is necessary as much for India's well-being as for the help of the world outside. The world of thought is now dominated by Western culture which in its present phase is predominantly rationalistic, utilitarian, industrial and economic. If we want to adjust this predominance, India's contribution of spirituality and religious philosophy to the world's thought must go out, reinforce the spiritual forces of the West and help to spiritualise the aims, aspirations, the basis and the plan and purpose of the social structure and scheme of life. This has been thrown into violent relief by latest developments. Slowly the thinkers of the West are finding out that what they need to preserve their culture and all that has been attained by it for the progress of humanity is a spiritual basis, an augmentation of the spiritual forces of the West which are seeking for mastery there, denying the reign of industrialism, commercialism or politics. In this the contribution of Indian thought will be a help and reinforcement to the establishment of these spiritual tendencies which are emerging from the best thought of the West. India, in her turn by winning a recognition of

her own spiritual type of culture in the domain of the world's thought will preserve her own civilisation and save spirituality for the world from being swamped and put an end to by prevailing rationalism, commercialism and political nationalism. Then the East and West will meet at the altar of the spiritual motive of life.

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This is the *sadhana* of the collective life of Indian society. Success in this will depend upon whether we are prepared to recognise Spirituality and Religion as the backbone and theme of our collective existence and in loyalty to it refuse to surrender it to other industrial and political views, rousing the land in the spirit of Sanatana Dharma and work for the spiritual regeneration of India; and secondly, whether the best minds of the country will dedicate themselves to the service of these ideas and strive for its propagation and dissemination all over the world.

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It is not to be done in a day or a year, but will have to be the conscious *sadhana* (endeavour) of the people for years. Will it appeal to the stouter chords of the heart of Indians, will it rouse their *Shraddha*, faith in their spiritual destiny and set them working out the plan of their ancient civilisation? As other peoples conserve all their energies and apply them to political greatness and commercial prosperity, the mission of India is "to conserve, to preserve and accumulate all the spiritual energy of the race and that concentrated energy to pour forth as a deluge on the world." (Swami Vivekananda's lecture from Colombo to Almora). This is the worship of the Sanatana Dharma. This is the call of the real Mother India to the best minds, the flower of the youth of this country to be Her champion and proclaim



Her all over the world with the voice of peace and benediction. This will be the bringing together of East and West on the common altar of the Spirit and in the success of this is centred the salvation of India and the world.

In this connexion, a letter written to the "Times" of London by Sir Francis Younghusband shows which way the wind is blowing :—

" \* \* it is time that we realised much more vividly than we do that our relations with India are not only political and economic, but spiritual. They are concerned with art and literature, philosophy, science and religion as well as with politics and business. And these cultural and social relations with India are far more important than the political, for their object is the spirit rather than the mechanism, the end rather than the means.

As we gradually transfer political power from our hands to the hands of Indians, we shall have to increase the intimacy of these higher relations. We shall have to look less to Secretaries of State and Viceroys and Government officials to conduct our relations with the people of India, and more to our leaders of thought and art and society. To some small degree our poets are already in touch with Indian poets, our philosophers with Indian philosophers, our religious thinkers with Indian men of religion. What will be now necessary is that this contact on the spiritual side of Indian life—the side to which Indians themselves attach the chief importance—should be far closer in future. We shall then touch the soul of India. Mutual understanding, mutual respect, and as we must hope mutual affection should be the result. And this, after all, must be the supreme goal of our ambitions—an end which could by no possibility be achieved by political reforms, but which political reforms may greatly assist us to attain."

### CHINA AND THE VEDANTA.

**I**N this period of ferment and transition through which the world is passing the Vedanta has an unique opportunity of attaining a world-wide influence and of building on the foundations so firmly laid by Swami Vivekananda and his colleagues. There is now no country so susceptible to ideas as China, the last of the Eastern nations to open its gates to the West. The danger is that the Chinese in their present plastic state of mind may fall under the sway of a sordid materialism or at best of the shallow semi-Christian secularism now popular in the West.

Vedantism should bring out all that is best in the old Chinese religions and use them as a medium for its teachings, enriching itself in the process. The Chinese genius is secular and practical rather than mystical and metaphysical, and requires

that the development of spirituality shall not have a detrimental effect on social life. The syncretist San Chiao or Triad of Teachings—Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism—although it tends towards indifference and apathy, combines spiritual and secular elements with considerable success. There is not space here for a comprehensive survey of Chinese religions but a few important points may be indicated.

Confucianism is a more or less agnostic ethico-political system. Widely divergent as the social ideals of India and China may seem, they agree in the emphasis laid on the family apart from either the individual or the State. Hence springs the great cult of ancestor-worship which is the basis of Confucianism in China and Shintoism in Japan.



Taoism first appears in history as a quietist mysticism of beautiful though paradoxical ethics, pantheistic or naturalistic in philosophy. A careful study of the Taoist scriptures reveals much purely Vedantist thought beneath their crude dialectic and fantastic imagery. Chuang-tzu in his 'Identity of contraries' declares that the sage discards all duality, and loses perception of subject and object in the Tao (cf. the Nirvikalpa Samadhi). Again Lao-tzu distinguishes between the Tao as *Nirguna* and *Saguna*:—"The Tao which can be expressed in words is not the eternal Tao; the name which can be uttered is not its eternal name. Without a name it is the Originator of Heaven and Earth; with a name it is the Mother of all.....Under these two aspects it is really the same." (—Tao te-ching I. 1—4). Taoism however never regarded the Tao *Saguna* as a Personal God; it was thus not religion in the narrower sense of the word, but it gradually lapsed into polytheism and demonolatry in its efforts to compete with Buddhism. "Buddhism" says Sze Ma-chien, "took the best out of Taoism and Taoism took the worst out of Buddhism." The early Taoist mystics were adepts in the Science of Breath and exercised various occult powers; in later times these powers were sought after for their own sake and not merely as concomitants of true spirituality. Taoism as a religion is now moribund, but primitive Taoism is still of value to the modern world, and several Western scholars have formed a very high estimate of the Tao-te-ching.

Buddhism introduced Bhakti into Chinese religion. Chinese Buddhism belongs to the Mahayana branch, which, on its philosophical side, is little else than a distorted Vedantism. Sun-yata and Brahman are really synonymous, for Brahman

is mere nihility according to the standard of relative knowledge; the fatal weakness of early Buddhism however lay in its denial of the Atman. But when the nihilism of the Madhyamikas had declared the Dharmas to be illusory and the idealism of the Vijnanavadins had resolved them into pure thought (*chittamatra*), Buddhism imperceptibly merged into Vedantism. L. de la Vallée Poussin criticizing a late Buddhist apologetic, the Lankavatara, says: "But is it not a strange method of converting the Vedantists to teach them Vedantism in Buddhist garb?" The Mahayana regarded the Buddhas and Bodhisats as manifestations of the Absolute, the Dharmakaya; in India they soon came to be identified with the Hindu deities, but in China and Japan they retained the stamp of the personality of Sakyamuni. Since the cessation of intercourse between India and China at the beginning of the Middle Ages, Chinese Buddhism has greatly degenerated, but it is by no means dead, and already there have been local revivals.

When Young China fully appreciates its heritage of the past and its ancient treasures of literature and art it will also value the religious spirit which was the inspiration of Chinese civilisation. R.F. Johnston, one of the most sympathetic of Orientalists, says: "It is a fact that few of us can hope to gain true insight into the spiritual core of Chinese culture until we have followed in the footsteps of the great poets and painters of T'ang, Sung and Ming, and have wandered as they did among the beautiful mountain homes of monastic Buddhism.....Only then will stream and wood, crag and waterfall, cast over us the same spell that they cast over China's hill-roaming painters and minstrel-pilgrims." However few its actual adherents Buddhism is still the link between



India, China and Japan. Japanese Buddhists have been recently assisting their co-religionists in China and have also got into touch with Indian thought by their study of Buddhist origins. Moreover Buddhism ranges from a mystical pantheism almost Vedantist to a devotional theism almost Christian. The present writer

believes that the soteriology of the Mahayana finds its fulfilment in Christ, but admits that Christianity has been so moulded by Western thought as to become anti-Vedantist, so that Buddhism may help to reconcile it with the Vedanta.

G. F. HUDSON.

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### MESSAGE OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON KARMA.\*

**S**WAMI VIVEKANANDA gave his message with such boldness, such freedom of thought, such directness, and above all with such a burning appeal for the suffering millions that it is unnecessary to make commentaries on them. His spirit seems to speak through his writings. He did not talk platitudes, neither did he pose. Tears he shed and life-blood he gave. To read him makes one sit up and think. Yes, think and soon to work,—work constructive—however humble might be our lot. For in youth we mainly derive our inspiration through love of persons and later in manhood through interest in work and ideas. These he amply fulfils.

After his highest spiritual realisation with his Master at Dakshineswar he travelled the length and breadth of India, and this not in an American tourist fashion but in a way which he himself has sung, "with sky thy roof and grass thy bed. And food? what chance may bring." He travelled, and he saw *India*. He saw her once joyous notes of life now sunk into murmurs and sobs, her once glorious light now waxed dim, her once flaming fires now grown cold. He saw the ignorance that permeates and apathy that exists. He saw the ravages of famine, plague, cholera, small-pox, and malaria and other deities of destruction. He saw how amidst all these the

millions are fast decaying losing everything in their bare struggle for existence.

He saw all these. And Vivekananda had a heart. He felt. He realised the crisis—crisis so stupendous, so imminent as to awaken the deepest slumbers of memory. He looked back to the hoary past with love and reverence, and saw the possibility of reviving its glorious traditions. To gaze into the future through the grim realities of the present required the strongest stretch of vision. And Vivekananda's vision of the future was one of hope and not of fear: He says:—

"Though whirlwind after whirlwind of foreign invasion has passed over the devoted head of India, though centuries of neglect on our part has visibly dimmed the glories of ancient Aryavarta, though many a stately column on which it rested, many beautiful arches, many marvellous corners have been washed away by the inundation that deluged the land for centuries—the centre is all sound—the key-stone is unimpaired; the spiritual foundation upon which the marvellous monument of glory to God and charity to all beings has been reared, stands unshaken, strong as ever."

What about the present—the rehearsal of the future in actualities? He first tried to find out the cause. His diagnosis is that at present India is not suffering from excess of spirituality, as many would have us believe; on the contrary it is the lack of her true

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\*A lecture delivered at the Vivekananda Society, Calcutta.



spirituality that has brought on the existing condition. He saw how great our forefathers were. What glorious vision their Upanishads held. How high their notes were. What imageries they evolved. What characters they depicted. Yes, characters hardly matched and rarely surpassed in any country or by any language; the ideal householder—king Janaka; Sita the ideal woman, “purer than purity itself and chaster than chastity itself, all patience, all suffering”; Rama, the ideal king, Mahabir Hanuman, the ideal worker; Karna the hero; Grandfather Vishma the warrior-saint; Krishna the child, Krishna the beloved, Krishna the charioteer, Krishna the divine. And above all Shiva, Mahadev, utterly indifferent to relativity of things, Ascetic of ascetics, giver of all knowledge, and who alone dares hold the poison that comes out of churning of this ocean of life. What thought, what life must have evolved this Mahadeva! What infinite power lies dormant in Him!

These he felt. Yet he did not fail to see how in our existing society religion has all but degenerated into customs, petrified into laws devoid of the very spirit that created them and is acting as a suffocating dead-weight, crushing all thought. Religion in society, for all practical purposes, has become reduced to “Don’t-touchism,” as Swamiji puts it graphically, while true spirituality has either gone inside the temple with the devout, or else retired to the caves with the ascetics in their sacred seclusion.

He went to the West and saw her civilisation. He did not condemn the Western civilisation as purely materialistic, as some of us do, and now particularly referring to this world-war, as the index of their civilisation, and who forget that here in India with her present spiritual civilisation, in normal times, in times of profoundest peace, famine, cholera, plague, small-pox, malaria and the rest claim more misery and toll of life, than any war. Influenza alone has 6 millions of lives to her credit and the total misery is not possible to

depict. Swamiji saw much in the West to admire, their manliness, their practicality, their spirit of adventure, their heroic sacrifice, their social freedom, their civic ideals. He says:—

“We talk foolishly against material civilisation. Grapes are sour. Even taking all that foolishness for granted, in all India there are say a hundred thousand really spiritual men and women. For the spiritualisation of these, must three hundred millions be sunk into savagery and starvation? Why should any starve? Material civilisation, nay even luxury we want to create work for the poor. Bread! Bread! I do not believe in a God who cannot give me bread here, giving me eternal bliss in heaven!”

Yet despite all these he repeatedly affirms that India is to be saved through her religion. Swamiji knew India, and loved her. He was asked: “Well, Swami, how do you like India after your glorious experience of the West?” He replied: “India I loved before I came away from her, but now the very dust of India has become holy to me, a place of pilgrimage, a *tirtha*.” Being a Sannyasin he had nothing to fear, as he had nothing to lose and nothing to gain. So it was not policy that made him say that. It was the truth he saw and felt. He realised that each country has its dominant tradition and its own special line of evolution. Religion has been our line. The choice glorious, or the choice fateful, as you like, was made in ages long gone by and we cannot alter it now. Inevitable crisis must follow. We could but rise up to the occasion and readjust to suit our new environment, and take this as an opportunity of our own development. Swamiji saw that however priest-ridden, however degenerated, the religious ideas and ideals still govern the life of the people. It is either Sita-Rama, or Radha-Krishna who inspire them and sustain them in their existence. And he tried to revive it, to make it living. He interpreted religion anew. He made it vital, the religion of life, suited to our present needs and future



developments, and these at their fullest and best. He begged the ascetic to descend from his Himalayan heights and the devout to come out of his temple and renew their contact with life throbbing, life moving, life evolving. Religion is the vision we hold and its realisation in life. It is our relation with the infinite. How we allow ourselves to be acted on by the environment and how we react on the complex, ever changing, ever evolving environment, for we are not creatures that are finished but creators of our creaturehood, imperishably active. Thus our religion consists not merely of our brief meditative moments, but it comprehends life's every detail, how we act, how we think, how we feel.

Swamiji saw what priceless treasures our forefathers have left us, treasures gathered through centuries of life's experiments and experiences, of heroic deeds and bold speculation—treasures open to labour and merit. He wanted us all to enjoy and to be able to enjoy. What good would it be to possess the best of the libraries if we cannot think, much less if we cannot read. And yet he did not blame us. Vivekananda of all knew that man's physical needs are fundamental and that of the intellect central and only after these are adequately developed, true spirituality can follow. But with bodies half-famished, minds mostly occupied in evading the grasp of starvation, or at best engrossed in litigation, what chance is there for spirituality to develop? For any knowledge we need experience, for experience we have to work, and for work we need food and health. "India is to be raised, the poor are to be fed, education is to be spread." These he indicated as the religion of India at present if she does not want to be wiped off from the face of the earth with all her Vedas and philosophies!

He appealed to us the youth of the nation. He appealed to our youthful enthusiasm, to youth's natural unselfishness. He believed in us. As such he did not encumber us with a

catalogue of dogmas. The details of life are infinite and no doctrine and no one system of doctrines can comprehend them all. Dogmas he did not preach. That would at once have given rise to a new sect, and in India particularly. And we would soon be found putting up his works on a pedestal and reverently prostrating before them. For easier it is to read his writings than to realise in life even a part of his ideals. Easier still to procure a series of his complete works and not trouble to read them. And the easiest of all is to make these books sacred and satisfy our conscience and forget all the ideas and ideals contained therein, ideas and ideals for which he gave his life. Or else with our keen logic we would be found making commentaries on Vivekananda's works, and commentaries on commentaries of Vivekananda's works and so on till we successfully evaporate his spirit.

Vivekananda left us free to choose our work and ideas from the many facets which life presents. He would, we rather made many mistakes than see himself used as a dead-weight of authority to dwarf individuality and check freedom of thought. He wanted us to assimilate all the good things of the West, but he vehemently protested against blind imitation. Imitation, as we all know, is the particular virtue of our Darwinian grandfathers. A monkey will do a thing just because some one has done it before or is doing it. But it is the prerogative of man to think and reason. Take for instance though he insisted that India is to be regenerated through her religion he would not have advised us that because of its religious character, the erection of a few more temples in honour of *Sitalamai*, after the existing pattern, and further elaboration of her rituals, as the proper course to adopt for fighting the epidemics. He certainly would ask us to take the most up-to-date scientific counsel on the matter and find means to carry them out in their utmost details. He would suggest building of hospitals and research laboratories. Only perhaps he



would wish us to think them as not mere hospitals and laboratories, but as the true temples to the living deities of disease, and thus at once giving them the dignity they require and ideality they now lack, and this alike for the workers and their patients. Perhaps you all know that it was after Dr. Sir Kailash Chandra Bose pointed out that vaccination was nothing but receiving the real *chandanam* (sandal-paste) of *Sitalamai*, that the Marwari community would be induced to be vaccinated. It would have taken years and probably by that time most of them would have joined the *mai* and a very few left for vaccination, before they could understand its necessity in modern scientific language. Vaccination, injection and the rest, in the language of human imagery is nothing but receiving the real *chandanam* of the deities of disease. Their real worship is in the savant's laboratory and in the doctor's hospital. Must we always insist on the jaw-dislocating Latin compounds and their equally terse and aggressive modern scientific explanation in favour of human imageries? This is but an individual instance, yet it shows clearly how our people have a different vision of life and as such different ideas and imageries. It also shows that we cannot afford to destroy anything before replacing something better. Vivekananda's note was, "Help. Do not destroy. Help if you can, otherwise fold your hands and let things pass by." Let us try our best to bring in the light of modern knowledge and make these imageries living and not ruthlessly destroy them.

About life individual he pointed out what our true religion says. Each is great in his own work provided he fulfils his duties, be he a king or a sweeper, a monk or a butcher. He drily remarks: "Place the king in the sweeper's position and see how he fares." And his story about the Vyadha is worth quoting.

"A young Sannyasin went to a forest and there he meditated, worshipped and practised Yoga for a long time. After years of hard

work and practice, he was one day sitting under a tree, when some of the dry leaves fell over his head. He looked up and saw a crow and a crane fighting on top of the tree which made him very angry. He said, "What! Dare you throw these dry leaves upon my head!" With these words he angrily glanced at them, a flash of fire went out of his head—such was the Yogin's power—and burnt the birds to ashes. He was very glad, almost overjoyed at this development of power; he could burn the crow and the crane by a look. After a time he had to go to the town to beg his food. He went and stood at a door and said,—“Mother give me food.” A voice came from inside the house: “Wait a little, my son.” The young man thought: “You wretched woman, how dare you make me wait! You do not know my power yet.” While he was thinking thus the voice came again:—“Boy, don't be thinking too much of yourself. Here is neither crane nor crow.” He was astonished; still he had to wait. At last the woman came, and he fell at her feet and said, “Mother how did you know that?” She said, “I do not know your Yoga or your practices. I am a common everyday woman. I made you wait because my husband is ill, and I was nursing him. All my life I struggled to do my duty. When I was unmarried I did my duty to my parents, now I am married, I do my duty to my husband, that is all the Yoga I practised. But by doing my duty I have become illumined; thus I could read your thoughts and know what you have done in the forest. If you want to know something higher than this, go to the market of such and such town where you will find a Vyadha, who will tell you something that you will be very glad to learn.” The Sannyasin thought, “Why should I go to that town and a Vyadha!” But after what he had seen his mind opened a little, so he went. When he came near the town he found the market and there saw at a distance a big fat Vyadha cutting meat with a big knife, talking and bar-



gaining with different people. The young man thought, "Lord help me! Is this the man from whom I am going to learn? He is the incarnation of a demon if he is anything!" In the meantime this man looked up and said, "O Swami, did that lady send you here? Take a seat until I have done my business." The Sannyasin thought, "What comes to me here." He took his seat. The man went on with his work and after he had finished he took his money and said to the Sannyasin, "Come, sir. Come to my house." On reaching home the Vyadha gave him a seat, saying "Wait here," and went into the house. He then bathed his old father and mother, and fed them and did all he could to please them, after which he came to the Sannyasin and said, "You have come to see me. What can I do for you?" The Sannyasin asked him a few questions about soul and God, and the Vyadha gave him a lecture which forms a part of the Mahabharata called the *Vyadha-Gita*. It contains one of the highest flights of Vedanta. When the Vyadha finished his teaching the Sannyasin felt astonished. He said, "Why are you in that body? With such knowledge as yours why are you a Vyadha and doing such filthy and ugly work?" "My son," he replied, "no duty is ugly, no duty is impure. My birth placed me in these circumstances and environments. In my boyhood I learnt the trade. I am unattached. I try to do my duty well. I try to do my duty as a householder, and I try to do all I can to make my father and mother happy. I neither know your Yoga, nor have I become a Sannyasin, nor did I go out of the world into a forest, nevertheless all that you have heard and seen has come to me through the unattached doing of the duty which belongs to my position."

As for the life of a Sannyasin, his work and his ideals, we need not recall the past. All that is necessary for us is to remember that Vivekananda was a Sannyasin. Critics of life of *sannyas* must be very unobservant of

recent history; Narendra Nath Dutta as a lawyer might have won laurels in his profession, might have occupied the most coveted position in life. But Vivekananda is quite a different power altogether. What little we see of his life's influence is but a dim beginning.

It would be a great saving of energy for some constructive work if we would only remember that each is great in his own work so long he does it well and is unattached, and that the duty of the one is not the duty of the other.

About himself, he said: "My life's allegiance is to my Motherland, and if I had a thousand lives, every moment of the whole series would be consecrated to your service, my countrymen, my friends." Man he was and work he did. Monk he was and God he preached. His God was the suffering millions, the real living gods of his. *Elevation* of the depressed, classes was not his idea but *worshipping* God the poor, God the lowly, God the depressed, was his theme. He believed in the power of the Spirit, which is infinite, "made to bear upon matter evolves material development, made to bear upon thought evolves intellectuality, made to act upon itself makes of man a God." For our worship he wanted us to develop all these in a harmonious balance. This was his idea of revival of religion and unless we develop this true religious spirit, of worship of God in the needy, the task of feeding and educating our millions is well-nigh impossible.

"To work, to work" was his note. Work with love, work with unselfishness, work constructive, without thinking for praise or blame. It is such a joy to be able to work without being goaded by desire or fear. It is such a privilege to be of any use to any one. He is the better man of the two who does not ask "Give me my rights" but says "Tell me what must I suffer." It is our privilege to suffer. He says "Slaves want power to make slaves, Money is needed. But it is man who



makes money and not money the man. Men, men, men." He asks "Do you know what hunger is? Have you suffered? Do you feel? Have you love?" Then he bids us "Onward, forwards to the breach."

One vision he saw clear as life. "The Ancient Mother has arisen once more enthroned in her pedestal." And we hear the knights heralding her glories to the distant lands.

He appeals:

"Young men of Bengal, to you I specially appeal—

"Brethren, we know to our shame that most of the real evils for which the foreigners abuse the Hindu nation, are only owing to us. But Glory unto God; we have been fully awakened to it, and with His blessings, we will not only cleanse ourselves, but help the whole of India to attain the ideals preached in the religion eternal.

"Let us first wipe off that mark which nature always puts on the forehead of a slave—the stain of jealousy. Be jealous of none. Be ready to lend a hand to every worker of good.

"Say not a man is sinner. Tell him that he is a God. Even if there were a devil it would be our duty to remember God always and not the Devil.

"If a room be dark, the constant feeling and repeating of darkness will not take it away, but bring in the light. Let us know that all that is negative, all that is destructive, all that is mere criticism is bound to pass away; it is the positive, the affirmative, the constructive that is immortal, that remains for ever. Let us say "We are, and God is. We are Gods, Soham, Sivoham! And march on."

BASISWAR SEN.

## WHY I BECAME A HINDU AND SOME OF MY INDIAN EXPERIENCES

(Concluded from page 165.)

THE study of Vedanta may take us away from the narrow teachings of the Church, but it will make us worshippers of the true Christ who dwells in every heart.

For example, when Swami Vivekananda heard the story of Magdalene who came to Jesus and washed his feet with ointment, and wiped them with her hair, the Swami exclaimed: "Had I lived in Jesus' time, I would have washed his feet with my heart's blood." Was not the Swami at that moment a true Christian? Did not he realise in a flash the divinity of Christ? And in doing so, was he not also a true Hindu? Did he not also do honour to his own Master, who had told him that he had worshipped Jesus and that Jesus the Christ had appeared before him and in his spiritual form had entered into his very being? Jesus and Ramakrishna were united, they had become one, even as Jesus was one with his heavenly Father. In Sri Ramakrishna all religions were united,—all

the Avatars were embodied in him. How then can we Hindus be at war with any sincere seeker after Truth, no matter what religion he belongs to. Does not Vedanta hold the key to all religions?

I remember, how once, on my way to Delhi, I was travelling in a third class compartment and I wore my *genua* cloth. A missionary had noticed me, and at every station he would leave his own compartment and have a good look at me. At last he took courage and he entered my compartment. Then he asked me why I had forsaken Jesus? I told him: "Sir, seeing that I have adopted the Hindu religion, you take it for granted that I do not honour Christ. But you are greatly mistaken. It was through a Hindu that I first came to understand who Jesus really was. I looked upon Jesus as a great and good teacher, a holy man. But through the Swami Vivekananda I have learned to regard him as one of the Incarnations of God." And I told him



that only after coming to India had I learned to appreciate many of Jesus' sayings and parables. Only in India had the stories of the Bible become real and life-like to me. Jesus' most valuable teachings had remained obscure and meaningless to me, until I came to this country. For here, the same truths that Jesus taught have been understood better than they are understood by the majority of the preachers in the West. Here, these truths have been carried into practice for ages, long, long before Jesus appeared on earth. Jesus was an Easterner, he spoke in the language of the East. He was a Sannyasin, he walked in the foot-steps marked out by the ancient Hindu scriptures. Jesus was a sage, a Son of God. And in this land of sages, of Avatars, his words are understood not only in the letter, but also in the spirit.

It is for these reasons that I say that as a Vedantin I am a Christian in the true spirit of the word. Vedanta includes all religions. But I am not a church-Christian. The churches will still have to come to India, will still have to sit at the feet of Indian sages to learn the true significance, to get the true interpretation of Jesus' sublime teachings.

The majority of Christians in every land can hardly conceive of the possibility that there may be a religious faith as great or greater than their own. The attitude of Christians towards other faiths is extremely egotistic and arrogant. They forget that seen through other eyes their religion and its effect on their lives, may not be quite as exalted as they think it to be. How is it that among educated Hindus the endless efforts of Christian missionaries have produced no effect? We cannot say that the Hindus cannot grasp their religion or that it is indifference on their part. For it is well-known that the Hindus are the most philosophical and the most religious of all races. The reason must lie elsewhere. And the reason is not very flattering to Christian ears. The Hindus know that in religion the Western races are far inferior to themselves. It is a blunt statement, but it is the truth.

Let me give you an instance of the arrogance of some Christians. When the great Parliament of Religions was held in Chicago, all the European countries were invited to send their representatives. But one of the smaller countries refused to send

delegates. And what was the reason? The Christians of that country thought it beneath their dignity to place their own religion in parallel with heathen faiths. They considered Christianity so infinitely superior to other faiths, that they considered it an insult to their own religion to place it on the same platform with Eastern beliefs. This fortunately was but a single instance. But do not we find a spirit of narrowness and intolerance amongst a large number of Christians in every land? In India we see only too much of that. And this is what puts a blot on the otherwise praiseworthy endeavours of so many missionaries who want to be of use to this country. Of course, there are exceptions. And India is not slow in appreciating the real worth of any man.

Now let us see how others regard the national religion of the West. In the year 1876 the Emperor of Japan sent a committee of thoughtful men to Europe to study and observe particulars about the Christian religion. These men were to note the difference between the various sects and also to observe what effect the Christian faith had upon the masses of the people. This was done with the idea that, if the report were favourable, Christianity would be adopted by Japan as the religion of the State. Here was an opportunity for an enormous expansion of the Christian faith. But the report of the committee, when they returned to Japan, was altogether unfavourable. The hopeless muddle and confusion that exists in the religious world of the West and the fact that as a vital force the teaching of Christ was hardly a factor at all in the lives of the people, made the Japanese Government conclude that it was not worthwhile to change their religion to Christianity. And Japan kept to Shintoism as the state-religion, though the majority of the people are Buddhists.

It was one of my great experiences in India to discover that religion here holds a far more prominent place in the lives of the people than is the case in the West. And I can say from experience that, travelling through India and observing the masses here, one is more often reminded of Jesus, his life, and his teaching, than one is in travelling in Western countries.

Though Christianity has made no inroad into India to speak of, though it has in no wise been able to enrich Indian thought or to exert its in-



fluence over the masses, the Hindus as a race come nearer to being the true followers of the truth that Jesus taught than are the Western races. And this is not because Christ came and lived among man, but because what he taught and lived, forms part of that Eternal Religion which had its birth in India and which even to-day is dearer to the Hindu heart than all the prosperity of which the West is so proud.

As a Vedantist I can heartily accept Jesus and his words; but I always did object to the interpretation of that wonderful life as it is given to us by the Christian churches. I am glad and proud to call myself a Vedantist, because through the teaching of Vedanta as we have it in the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Gita, in the Gospel of Ramakrishna and in Swami Vivekananda's works, we can understand somewhat of the real greatness of all spiritual men, be they Christian, Hindu, Mohamedan or Jew.

We, as Hindus, have our own saints, our own Incarnations. But that does not prevent us from paying the deepest respect and worship to saints of other lands.

Another of my experiences in India is, that here I found not only tolerance, but sympathy with all religions. Every religion is welcome in India, every faith may establish itself here without the least fear of being persecuted. And no Hindu will ever think even of desecrating a place of worship. Every place of worship is holy in the sight of the Hindus.

As Hindus we say: "Brother, worship God in your own way. Only one thing we ask of you,—do not disturb our faith, let us also worship in our own way."

How different it is in the West. Thank God we no longer live in the time of Inquisition when men and women by the thousands were tortured to death because they could not accept a prescribed faith. But just the same, this religious sympathy and tolerance is a lesson that the West may well take to heart. Fortunately, and thanks to Eastern influence, the West is now beginning to learn that lesson. There is no Christian to-day who does not look back in horror on the barbarous methods employed in religious persecutions in earlier days. To-day we can hardly believe it to be true, but records show, that in Spain alone the Inquisition

burnt alive more than thirty one thousand persons. And think of it! This was done, as Queen Isabella said: "For the love of Christ and his Virgin Mother."

It is a sad story, the story of the Christian Church and Christian martyrs. It is a story of the past and we need not dwell on it to-day. Neither shall we blame Christ or his teaching for the crimes committed by those who call themselves his followers. But well may we ask the question: Is Christian civilisation after all such a perfect success as our Christian friends will have us believe? Class-distinction, mammon-worship, oppression, competition,—all these abuses may well humble the Western nations. We do not blame the churches for these conditions, but it is a fact just the same that the churches, who send men to other nations to bring a higher civilisation, as they say, have not been able to keep their own countries clean and pure and honest. That is why so many people in the West have lost faith in the church and are looking elsewhere for consolation and a broader and truer interpretation of Christ's life and teachings and a truer application of his commands.

Cannot we say then, and say it with confidence, that India has a message for these men and women? In matters religious, India has nothing to learn from the West. On the other hand, India has much to teach to the Western races. Christian missionaries may well consider this before they attempt to break down the Hindu faith and to replace it with their own. The West needs the message of the East.

And the message has already gone forth and is going forth, thanks to the effort of the Swami Vivekananda and those who have followed him in the field. The work of the Ramakrishna mission in the West may not at present loom up on a very big scale; as a mission we may still look quite insignificant in the West. But the ground has been prepared and the seed has been planted there. And our Swamis at work there now are watering the young plant and are protecting it. And now and then they reap the harvest.

Who shall say through how many channels Swami Vivekananda's spirit and power is finding expression to-day? His name may not appear, but by the fruit we know the tree. Vedanta is now being preached under different guises in the West.



There are attempts everywhere to make the teachings of the East known in the West. There is the New Thought movement, Christian Science, Christian Yoga. What are these but chips from the old block? There is nothing new in these teachings from an Eastern standpoint. These are simply teachings taken at random from the Hindu scriptures. To-day, Swami Vivekananda's influence can be perceived in a thousand directions.

And who shall say how many lives have been changed by coming in contact with the Swami Vivekananda and his brother workers? You will be surprised to hear that many even have accepted Sri Ramakrishna as the latest Incarnation of God. We do not know the number of these. We never will know. But we do know that Ramakrishna's own words are already fulfilled, that many in the West worship him to-day. In many a home I have seen his picture and that of Swami Vivekananda on the altar where they are worshipped. And in many a Christian home the Bhagavad Gita is placed alongside of the Christian Bible.

Not many of the Western devotees have come to India. It is no easy matter to make that long journey. But I know that many look upon India as a place of pilgrimage,—a pilgrimage which sooner or later they hope to be able to undertake. To them India is not only the land of the Vedas and Vedic Rishis, but it is also the place where Sri Ramakrishna lived and taught, and the birthplace of the Swami Vivekananda. For such it is but natural that they should call themselves Hindus and not Christians and that they should come to India should an opportunity present itself.

But we need not trouble ourselves with the question whether we should call ourselves Christians or Hindus, whether we should accept one Incarnation or another. He who has accepted one Incarnation accepts them all, for they are all born of the same Spirit.

And when we accept Sri Ramakrishna as the latest manifestation of God on earth, we do so with the conviction that in him we find the fulfilment of the past ages, that in him we find the culmination of the world's culture and spiritual attainment. And when we accept Swami Vivekananda's gospel as the gospel of this age, we do so because in his gospel we find the wisdom of all ages, the fundamental Truth on which all religions

are constructed. He brought to the West the gospel that his Master revived in India,—the ancient gospel, the Sanatana Dharma, the eternal Truth, the religion of the Hindus.

And so by becoming Hindus, we, who are born in Christian lands, do not lose anything. It means expansion, a broadening out, a wider vision. For now we can worship at all shrines, we can adore all saints, we can join in worship with every lover of Truth.

What more shall I tell you about my Indian experiences? Is not it a great experience for one born in the West to come to this land, made sacred by Rishis and sages, the land where in all ages man has understood that God alone is real and all else is but vanity; the land where the Lord takes human birth for the salvation of man? And the land, as Swami Vivekananda tells us, where every soul is bound to come to pay his final debt of Karma? It is a great experience to come to this country. And I hope that in time many of the Western devotees will find it possible to come here and to mix with the people, as it has been my good fortune to do. But should this prove impracticable, then I hope that those who are sincere in their search for Truth may be benefited by the work that the Ramakrishna Mission has undertaken in the West, the work inaugurated by the revered Swami Vivekananda.

Great work has been done, but, to quote Jesus's words:

"The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth labourers into the harvest."

Sri Ramakrishna and the Swami Vivekananda came not for India alone, they came to save the world—a world trembling under the despotism of evil forces. The harvest must be gathered in all lands. For it was the appeal of the Swami Vivekananda to his Hindu brethren that they might go forth to the four corners of the earth to preach their religion, that they might fulfil their mission and offer their share to the world's progress. If the West has something to teach to the East, forget not that India's gift is the greatest, for her religion alone can bring peace and satisfaction to every human heart.



## VIVEKACHUDAMANI

(Continued from page 166.)

विकारिणां सर्वविकारवेत्ता  
नित्याविकारो भवितुं समर्हति ।

मनोरथस्वप्नसुषुप्तिषु स्फुटं

पुनः पुनर्दृष्टमसत्त्वमेतयोः ॥२६५॥

295. It is the knower of all changes in things subject to change, therefore It should be eternal and changeless. The unreality of the gross and subtle bodies is again and again clearly noticed in imagination, dream and profound sleep.

[ *The unreality.....sleep*: Because the subtle is not perceived in the Sushupti state and the gross body in the dream and Sushupti states. ]

अतोऽभिमानं त्यज मांसपिण्डे  
पिण्डाभिमानिन्यपि बुद्धिकल्पिते ।

कालत्रयाबाध्यमखण्डबोधं

ज्ञात्वा स्वमात्मानमुपैहि शान्तिम् ॥२६६॥

296. Therefore give up thy identifications with this lump of flesh—the gross body, as well as with the Ego or the subtle body, which are both imagined by the Buddhi. Realising thy own Self, which is Knowledge Absolute and not to be denied in past, present and future,—attain to Peace.

[ *Imagined by Buddhi*—Because they are not in Atman and our ignorance conjures them up through the Buddhi or determinative faculty.

*Denied &c.*—Because the Atman transcends time. ]

त्यजाभिमानं कुलगोत्रनाम-  
रूपाश्रयेष्वाद्रशवाश्रितेषु ।

बिद्मस्य धर्मानपि कर्तृतादी-

स्त्यक्त्वा भवाखण्डसुखस्वरूपः ॥२६७॥

297. Cease to identify thyself with family, lineage, name and form which pertain to the body, which is like a rotten

corpse (to a Jnanin). Similarly giving up the ideas that thou art the agent and so forth, which are attributes of the subtle body, be thou the Essence of Bliss Absolute.

[ *Rotten corpse*—The body appears as living only through the erroneous identification of the Buddhi, and when that ceases on realisation, the body is nothing but a putrid corpse, to be shunned.

*Attributes of the subtle body*: The Jnani must realise his identity with the Atman alone. ]

सन्त्यन्ये प्रतिवन्धाः पुनः संसारहेतवो दृष्टाः ।  
तेषामेवं मूलं प्रथमविकारो भवत्यहङ्कारः ॥२६८॥

298. Other obstacles are also observed to exist for men, which lead to transmigration. The root of them, for the above reasons, is the first modification of Nescience they call Egoism.

[ *Other obstacles*—such as desires etc.

*For the above reasons*—because but for Egoism, which is a product of nescience, there would not be any false identification, and therefore no serious trouble. ]

यावत्स्यात्स्वस्य सम्बन्धोऽहंकारेण दुरात्मना ।  
तावन्न ज्ञेयमात्रापि मुक्तिवार्त्ता विवक्षया ॥२६९॥

299. So long as one has any relation with this wicked Ego, there should not be the least talk about Liberation, which is unique.

अहंकारग्रहान्मुक्तः स्वरूपमुपपद्यते ।

चन्द्रवद्विमलः पूर्णः सदानन्दः स्वयंप्रभः ॥३००॥

300. Freed from the clutches of Egoism, man attains to his real nature, as the moon from those of the planet Rahu. He becomes pure, infinite, eternally blissful and self-luminous.

[ *Graha* in Sanskrit means both 'planet' and 'seizure.' The eclipses of the sun and moon are



popularly ascribed by Hindu mythology to the periodical attacks by their enemy Rahu, a demon whom they prevented from drinking the nectar.]

यो वा पुरे सोऽहमिति प्रतीतो

बुद्ध्या प्रकल्पस्तमसाऽतिमूढया ।

तस्यैव निःशेषतया विनाशे

ब्रह्मात्मभावः प्रतिबन्धशून्यः ॥३०१॥

301. That which has been created by the Buddhi extremely deluded by Nescience, and which is perceived in this body as 'I am such and such,'—when that Egoism is totally destroyed, one attains an unobstructed identity with the Brahman.

[*I am such and such*—I am strong or weak, learned or ignorant, happy or miserable and so forth.]

ब्रह्मानन्दनिधिर्महाबलवताऽहंकारघोराहिना  
संवेष्ट्यात्मनि रक्ष्यते गुणामयेऽश्वरदेहिभिर्मस्तकैः ।  
विज्ञानाख्यमहासिना श्रुतिमता विच्छिद्य शीर्षत्रयं  
निर्मुल्याहिमिमं निधिं सुखकरं धीरोऽनुभोक्तुं क्षमः ॥

302. The treasure of the Bliss of Brahman is coiled round by the mighty deadly serpent of Egoism, and guarded for its own use by means of its three fierce hoods consisting of the three Gunas. Only the wise man destroying it by severing its three hoods with the great sword of Realisation in accordance with the teachings of the Srutis can enjoy this treasure which confers bliss.

[In this Sloka Egoism is compared to a three-headed snake. Sattva, Rajas and Tamas—balance, activity and inertia—are spoken of as its three hoods. The way to destroy it is through Realisation. When Egoism is gone, one is conscious of his real nature as Brahman. The appropriateness of the metaphors is obvious.]

यावद्वा यत्किञ्चिद्विषदोपस्फूर्तिरस्ति चेद्देह ।

कथमारोग्याय भवेत्तद्वदहन्तापि योगिनो मुक्त्यै ॥

303. As long as there is a trace of poisoning left in the body, how can one

hope for recovery? Similar is the effect of Egoism on the Yogi's Liberation.

अहमोऽत्यन्तनिवृत्त्या तत्कृतनानाविकल्पसंहत्या ।  
प्रत्यक्तत्त्वविवेकादिदमहमस्मीति विन्दते

तत्त्वम् ॥३०४॥

304. Through the complete cessation of Egoism, through the stoppage of the diverse mental waves due to it, and through the discrimination of the inner Reality, one realises that Reality as 'I am This.'

[*Mental waves*—such as doubt, wrong notion etc.]

अहंकारे कर्त्तव्यमिति मतिं मुञ्च सहसा  
विकारात्मन्यात्मप्रतिफलजुषि स्वस्थितिमुषि ।

यदध्यासात्प्राप्ता जनिमृतिजरादुःखबहुला  
प्रतीचश्चिन्मूर्त्तस्तव सुखतनोः संसृतिरियम् ॥३०५॥

305. Give up immediately thy identification with the Egoism—the agent—which is by its nature a modification, which is endued with a reflection of the Self, and which diverts one from being established in the Self,—identifying thyself with which thou hast come by this relative existence, full of the miseries of birth, decay and death,—though thou art the Witness, the Essence of Knowledge and Bliss Absolute.

[*Modification*—of Nescience, and therefore non-permanent.

*Endued etc.*—This makes it look intelligent.

*Relative existence*—Samsāra or transmigration.]

सदैकरूपस्य चिदात्मनो विभो-

रानन्दमूर्त्तरत्नवद्यकीर्त्तेः ।

नैवान्यथा काप्यविकारिणस्ते

विनाहमध्यासमुष्य संसृतिः ॥३०६॥

306. But for thy identification with that Egoism there can never be any transmigration for thee who art eternally the same, the Knowledge Absolute, omnipresent, the Bliss Absolute, and of untarnished glory.

[*Untarnished glory*—compare *Swetāswatara* Vi. 19.]

(To be continued).



## REVIEWS.

*Is India Civilised?* By Sir John Woodroffe. 2nd Edition. Pp. 355. Price Rs. 2/8-. To be had of Ganesh & Co., Madras.

It is a revised and enlarged edition with an addition of about 80 pages to the first impression. In the present reprint the author has taken advantage to incorporate and answer some of criticisms made on the first issue of the Book. The standpoint of the author seems to have been misunderstood in some quarters. He does not seem to us in reading the book to seek to demolish one type of culture and to establish another on its ruins, but the principal object seems to us to be in the course of vindicating the basic principles and ideas of Indian culture against demolishing criticism started by another to point out its essentials, its governing ideas, its basic principles which lie at the root of its present applications, however disguised and distorted and incidentally to bring before the gaze of those Indians who are foolishly and fatally deserting their cultural inheritance under the powerful glamour of a different culture. If there are elements of greatness, nobility and strength in these ideas, if they represent a distinct valuable enduring outlook on life, contributing to the progress and enlightenment of humanity, they need to be preserved and can best be preserved by those who have inherited it for future contribution to the world's thought. Secondly, for the renaissance and rejuvenescence of the present Indian people, and outward social structure, to suit modern environments, what is essential is not the throwing overboard of all our past inheritance and to be changed into replicas of other types of culture, but a more vigorous possession of the soul and essentials of our civilisation working out a mightier evolution in terms of modern life.

In the present edition a new chapter on "Sanskara" has been appended in which the author amplifies that Racial Soul, or the theme of a peoples life; the sum-total of its inherited tendencies inherited through long course of historical evolution is a very real thing, and not a figment of imagination, and this theme which colours and determines the line of its advancement and progress is very persistent, not easily to be shaken off; and it is not by obscuring, overlaying this theme by fastening unassimilated ideas and practices which sit loosely upon it, but by taking off the blocks and bars which hinder its flow, that the progress and advancement of the people is served. For the preservation of the Indian culture, as the awakening of the people to it and its vigorous possession by them is necessary, so also its positive propagation.

This book has had a large sale judging from its second issue after six months and in its present edition it is improved by the incorporation of new material and elaboration of old. We hope it will find a large circle of readers and furnish matter for thought and help to clarify the ideas of its Indian readers with regard to the essentials of Indian civilisation which is so much needed in this period of much confusion and muddle of thoughts, ideals and activities.

*Men I have Seen*, Pandit Shivanath Shastri, M. A.

Published from the Modern Review Office, 210/3/1, Cornwallis Street, Calcutta. Price Rs. 2.

These reminiscences of seven great Bengalees first appeared serially in the pages of the Modern Review which are now brought together in a book form. The author's reminiscences here brought together are of (1) Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar (2) Pandit Dwarkanath Vidyasagar (3) Anand Mohan Bose (4) Ramakrishna Paramahansa (5) Maharshi Devendranath Tagore (6) Mahendra Lal Sarkar (7) Rajnarain Bose. It is well to bring together and present before the minds of the rising generation the personality of the great men of the last generation of Bengal which has passed away as it cannot fail to be of morally elevating effect on their character. Bengal has produced a number of men who were truly great, who by their character and personality, have shaped and influenced the life and thought of Bengal and through Bengal of India, and some have and are exercising a world-wide influence. It is also to be desired that the character and personality and life-works of some of these great men of Bengal were more widely known outside of Bengal all over India as they form the beacon-posts to guide us to direct the ship of our culture and civilisation in these times of stress and conflict of ideals. The names of some of these great men of Bengal are household words in Bengal and much is known of their character, incidents of life, and these reminiscences also give us glimpses of the characteristic traits of nobility, strength and moral fibre of their character. Of Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar of revered memory, these reminiscences give glimpses of his austere and simple life, his sturdy independence and courage, above all his great heart and sympathy for human distress and suffering. The second reminiscence is of Pandit Dwarkanath Vidyabhusan and reveals the type of Hindu Brahman Pandit, dignified self-reliant with great depths of austere and moral being, living in his native village and exerting a morally elevating influence on his surroundings. The author's story of the life of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa is



interesting and brings out some points of his life, viz. his great hunger and thirst for religion and his sadhana for the Vision of God, and above all his great love for those whom he loved for their piety and devotion to God among whom the author was one. There are one or two statements made here which lend themselves to other explanations than what the author has given here. When he says that the austerities and severe strivings, practices and earnings for religions realisation brought about a mental derangement and insanity in him he altogether mistakes its import and gives a false impression. It is not the mental derangement of Ram, Sham or Hari, but has he not heard and read of divine intoxication and madness? When the powerful love of God breaks upon the human soul the frail human body and the feeble human mind is unable to contain it and in spite of all efforts to hide and keep it within, it breaks through all human restraints and invades the field of the mind making him forgetful and oblivious of external life for some time. The mind is then mostly absorbed in the super-conscious realm, and outward actions and attention to external life become very much diminished. This forgetfulness of externality due to the powerful rush of divine emotion is mistaken by worldly people as madness, because they have it not in their own experience and they cannot imagine this powerful attraction and love for a super-sensuous being, God. But this is a stage in spiritual progress, and is followed by what Sri Ramakrishna used to call the *सहजावस्था* (Sahajavastha). This is the maturing of spiritual consciousness and then the whole human personality settles down to a new equilibrium, when the old "self" is dead and gone and its place is taken by the Divine Self and the sense of God becomes the habitual centre of life and activity. So the state of inebriation and intoxication of God breaks upon the soul obliterating for some time his *vyavahara* i. e. the ordinary natural human consciousness, it is followed by the *सहजावस्था*—when the Divine consciousness settles down into being, God becomes part and parcel of his life, the guide, counsellor, and informer of his thoughts and activities. During the period of his ministry when *bhaktas* used to come to him, He was in this state of *सहजावस्था*, when divine emotion and consciousness flowed within a outward exterior in which he was awake to *vyavaharic* consciousness and lived and talked to men like any ordinary man; but any the least suggestion and response to the spiritual emotion which flowed within him, used to awaken them and he used to have those ecstatic trances in which he would lose himself. The Godward flow of his mind, his powerful love for God as result of which he used to have ecstatic trances at the least response to his spiritual emotion is incomprehensible to our intellect, because we have not the same intensity of

Divine love in us and some are apt in their allwiseness to associate it with fits and nervous disorders. It is no wonder that this frail human body will be unable to contain and be convulsed by the flow of Divine Power which is the sustainer of the whole universe and which flows through the personality of God-realised persons in the form of divine love and purity and holiness. Do we think the body to be more powerful than the Mahasakti—the Divine Power and energy? Well, may we, body-bound, and body-worshipping beings that we are! Even if this Shakti is awakened in us a little by prayer and Sadhanas it is too insufficient, therefore it does not produce any marked effect on the body; but in the case of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Chaitanya Deva, it is the abundance of this Mahasakti which flows through their lives producing those transformations of body which appear so inexplicable to us. We read in the life of Sri Chaitanya Deva the same inebriation with Divine love and its effects on the body in the form of ecstatic trances. When Sri Ramakrishna said to the author in answer to his loving expression of regret that these ecstatic trances tend further to weaken his health, he replied, "Yes, my friend, it will kill me,"—he did not say it in the spirit of repentance and wishing to shun them, as he never did in his life but in the sense that it would be a thing devoutly to be wished for to be killed by these assaults of divine love, for in that death is the attainment of all immortality. As Tukaram says in one of his songs—"It was a great *utsab*, a day of rejoicing, when I saw my death in the love of God." So we would respectfully ask the author to consider his statement about the mental derangement and insanity and about the nervous disorders of Sri Ramakrishna in the light of these observations which we humbly put forward and to alter them if he feels convinced, for they give an altogether false impression of the personality of Sri Ramakrishna and detract from the value of an excellently written, sympathetic testimony to his memory and teachings.

The author's reminiscences of Maharshi Devendranath Tagore brings out the atmosphere of devoutness in which the Maharshi passed his life and his great absorption in the devout Upasana of God which was such a great feature of the Maharshi's life. The reminiscences of Rajnarain Bose also reveal the life of a devout, pious person among the trails, temptations and sufferings of life.

*Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*.—With text, word-for-word Bengalee translation, a running translation of the original text,—commentary of Sankara, the Tika of Anandagiri on Sankara's commentary,—a Bengalee translation of Sankara's commentary and explanatory notes appended here and there. Translated and edited by Pandit Durgacharan Sankhya-Vedanta-Tirtha.—Published from the



Lotus Library, by Sj. Anil Ch. Dutt in parts. Price Re. 1-6-0 each.

We have recently received the 10th and 11th part of this publication, which appears to be well-executed. The explanatory notes appended at the bottom explaining difficult portions of Sankara's commentary are lucid and help very much the understanding of this rather difficult commentary of Sankara of the Upanishads. We wish there were more of these, as some portions of the commentary not easy to general understanding have not been touched, which would have benefited much by these comments. But of course the Editor has limitations of space. The publisher, Sj. Anil Chandra Dutt is doing a very needful work by spreading the knowledge of the Upanishads in a form easy to understand by the Bengali-reading public. It is a revival and spread of the Upanishadic lore above all other departments of Sanskrit culture which we need for the revivification of the Sanatana Dharma and for its purification from all superstitions accretions and in doing this work, the publishers are doing a work, the importance of which cannot be overestimated.

#### THE EIGHTEENTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE R. K. MISSION SEVASHRAMA, KANKHAL.

We have received the Eighteenth Annual Report of the Ramkrishna Mission Sevashrama, Kankhal, for the year 1918. It is gratifying to find that the Home has been admirably carrying on Seva Dharma in the light of worshipping God by serving the suffering humanity irrespective of caste, creed and nationality. The total number of patients admitted into the Sevashrama during the year was 329; of these 295 were cured and discharged, 17 left treatment, 16 died and 6 were still under treatment, at the close of the year. New patients numbering 13128 were treated at the outdoor dispensary, besides 17035 old and repeated numbers who also received medical help at the dispensary, thus making 30163 the total number of outdoor patients during the year.

Besides, the Home maintains a night school in the Ashrama to impart elementary education to children of the poor and depressed classes of the locality. The school is at present held in the verandah of the dispensary. But as the number of students intending to get admission into the school is on the increase every year, it is no longer possible to conduct the school in the verandah which is too small a place for the purpose. Hence the Home contemplates the erection of a building at a cost of Rs. 3000 and earnestly appeals to the kind-hearted people to help it in the accomplishment of its noble object.

We find in the Report that the number of outdoor patients has greatly increased during the last few years and they attend the dispensary from with-

in the radius of 30 miles. Pilgrims also visit this holy place from different parts of India and when epidemic diseases such as Cholera, Small-pox and Plague break out, they fall victims to them. The present dispensary has therefore proved to be too small to meet the demands of the patients and it is proposed to build a more commodious dispensary with a surgical operation room attached to it at a cost of Rs. 5000, of which Rs. 700 has kindly been contributed by Sj. Kunja Behari Lal, Engineer, Ahmedabad. The Ashrama hopes that the generous public will meet this pressing need of the Home by sending contributions for the fulfilment of this object.

The necessity of building a pucca house to lodge the relatives and friends who accompany the patients to the Ashrama suffering from infectious diseases is being keenly felt. Sometimes the outdoor patients who come to the dispensary from a distance of about 20 miles or more can not return home the same day and are to be housed in the Ashrama for the night. So it has been decided to build a pucca house at a cost of Rs. 3000.

The present ward for Indoor patients consisting of 8 seats only accommodates Sadhus and is only used for their treatment. As the case of other general patients and of pilgrims who come in large numbers to this holy place falling a prey to disease, calling upon services and demanding admission as indoor patients for whom there is no present accommodation for indoor treatment and who can no longer be refused relief, has been urgently pressing on the Sevashrama for some time therefore it has issued an appeal for funds for the General Ward for the indoor treatment of pilgrims and lay patients of all descriptions. The Home has made an appeal to the benevolent public in response to which Mr. Ramdas Kersondas of Bombay and Srijut Surya Kanta Roy Chowdhury of Taki have contributed a donation of Rs. 1250 each for the construction of three rooms of the Ward. A sum of Rs. 1500 is still required for the purpose. The Sevashrama hopes that some kind-hearted gentlemen will come forward to offer this amount, in perpetuation of the memory of any of his relatives if he so desires.

These are the pressing needs of the Home. The Sevashrama has been doing a work of social service in the alleviation of human sufferings and imparting education to the poor and we hope that the generous public will come forward and supply its pressing needs and help it to carry on its work of service by sending their kind contributions to (1) Swami Kalyanananda Ramkrishna Mission Sevashrama, Kankhal, Dt. Saharanpur, (2) Manager, Udbodhan Office, 1, Mukerjee Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta, (3) The President, The Math, Belur P. O. Howrah.



## NEWS AND NOTES.

We have received a report of the work and recent activities of the Vivekananda Society, Calcutta. This Society has been engaged in the work of spreading and popularising the various aspects of Indian religion and philosophy and considering the extent of apathy which still prevails with regard to our own religious and philosophical ore among us the desirability and value of its work in spreading the knowledge cannot be overestimated. Among the activities and works done under auspices of this Society may be mentioned.—(1) A series of nine lectures on the philosophy of the Vaishnava religion, all of which were delivered by Prof. Amulya Ch. Vidyabhusan—this interesting series is being published in the "Udbodhana." (2) Nine lectures on the Vedanta Philosophy by Prof. Kokileswar Shastri Vidyaratna M. A., (3) Two lectures on Buddhism by Mr. A. L. de Mynn,—an English Buddhist 'Upasaka,' (4) Two lectures by Revd. Swami Madhavananda—President Mayavati Advaita Ashram (i) on What Swami Vivekananda taught, (ii) On the Necessity of Religion in our daily life, (5) Swami Dayananda's (of the Bharat Dharma Mahamandala) lecture on "Matri-tattva," presided by Mny. Pt. Pramatha Nath Tarkabhusan, (6) Reception of the Revd. Swami Karunananda, Founder-President of the Sadhu-Sanga-Mahasava of South India, (7) Kabiratna Hemchandra Mukherji's 'Kathakata' on "Sridāma," (8) The Hon'ble Rai Bahadur P. N. Mukherji's lecture on "The aim of Life," (9) Buddha Anniversary—(10) Special lecture on Buddhism by Mr. H. A. Dharmapala (Buddhist monk) under the presidency of Mr. Hirendra Nath Dutt. Besides these on the anniversary of the Swami Vivekananda, speeches were made on the life and teachings of the illustrious saint, and religious discourses were held and songs sung, and a public celebration was held in the Calcutta University Hall under the presidency of Maharaja Manindra Chandra Nandi of Cossimbazar. Papers were read on the life and teachings of the Swami and after which several well-known speakers spoke on the life of the Swami from different standpoints.

We have received the following report of the R.K. Mission Sevashrama, Kankhal for June 1919:—Indoor patients: There were 6 old cases and 15 new admitted, 15 discharged cure, 1 died, 3 left treatment and 2 are still in the Sevashrama. Outdoor patients: There were 2126 of which 862 new and 1264 repeated numbers. Last month's balance Rs. 8554-12-0, total receipts Rs. 233-5-3. Total expenses Rs. 327-11-0; balance in hand Rs. 8460-6-3.

The report of the progress of Famine Relief Work of the Ramkrishna Mission in the month of June 1919 shows that a total of 718 mds. of rice was distributed to 3445 recipients in 204 villages in Bengal and Bihar. In the month of July a centre was opened at Bitghar in the district of Tippera, where first distribution extended in 9 villages among 520 recipients. And also workers were sent to Mihijam in the district of Santal-Parganas to start relief. Money has been advanced to the following places:—Rs. 90 to Ramakrishna Math, Bhubaneswar, Puri, for fire relief work; Rs. 25 to Ramakrishna Sevashrama, Latabdi, Dacca, for pecuniary help to the poor families; Rs. 200 to Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bharukathi, Barisal, for distribution of rice; Rs. 25 to Ramakrishna Sevashrama, Guthia, Barisal, for pecuniary help to the poor families. From different centres of relief 1614 pieces of new cloth were distributed. Distribution of seeds and building of huts for the recipients in our area have been begun and students and minor schools in the distressed areas are also being helped. Shops have been opened in the interior of the districts to supply rice with cheap rate to the labourers and the people with somewhat better conditions. Contributions to the following addresses are thankfully accepted and acknowledged:—(1) The President, R. K. Mission, Belur, Howrah. (2) The Secretary, R. K. Mission, Udbodhan Office, Bagbazar, Calcutta.

## AN APPEAL.

Distress due to the high price of rice and other commodities of daily consumption is making itself rapidly manifest in some parts of the district of Sylhet. Reports of distress in porganah Satarasati under the Moulvibazar Thana and in several villages under the Madhabpur police station have appeared in the recent issue of the 'Surma.' From the inspection report of our worker at Satarasati where we are going to start a relief centre, it appears that about 3000 people there stand in need of help which means a weekly distribution of 13 maunds of rice at the computation of single meal a day per head. This will cost nearly rupees 91/- a week. But the fund at the disposal of the Samiti has nearly been exhausted in Influenza, Cholera and cloth relief operations and the balance in hand is too small to meet the demand of a single week. We, therefore appeal to the generous public to extend their charity for the relief of the distressed people.

All contributions in cash or kind may be sent to Babu Nabani Kumar Gupta, B. A., Secretary, Ramakrishna Seva Samiti, Sylhet.